

## Testimony in support of SJ 5

February 12, 2007

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO IDENTIFY THE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES INVOLVED IN PROVIDING EMERGENCY CARE AND TO REPORT ON STRATEGIES THAT CAN STRENGTHEN MONTANA'S EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEM.

Chief Sponsor: **Senator John Bruggeman**

The American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association, representing 22.5 million volunteers and supporters, is dedicated to reducing disability and death from cardiovascular diseases and stroke. Coronary heart disease, stroke and related diseases are the **No. 1 killer in the United States (almost 950,000 deaths in the most recent reporting year)**, accounting for almost as many deaths as the next seven leading causes of death combined. In 2002, cardiovascular diseases cost this nation an estimated \$330 billion in medical expenses and lost productivity.

No statistics are available for the exact number of cardiac arrests that occur each year. However, about 250,000 people a year die of coronary heart disease without being hospitalized. That's about half of all deaths from CHD -- more than 680 Americans each day. Most of these are sudden deaths caused by cardiac arrest. Other factors besides heart disease and heart attack can cause cardiac arrest. They include respiratory arrest, electrocution, drowning, choking or trauma. Cardiac arrest also can occur without any known cause.

Brain death and permanent death start to occur in just 4 to 6 minutes after someone experiences cardiac arrest. Cardiac arrest can be reversed in most victims if it's treated with immediate CPR and an electric shock to the heart within 7 to 10 minutes. CPR consists of mouth-to-mouth breathing and chest compressions. The shock eliminates the abnormal rhythm and allows the heart's normal rhythm to resume. This process is called defibrillation.

A victim's chances of survival are reduced by 7-10 percent with every minute that passes without treatment. Few resuscitation attempts succeed after 10 minutes have elapsed. It's estimated that more than 95 percent of cardiac arrest victims die before reaching the hospital. In cities where defibrillation is provided within 5 to 7 minutes, the survival rate from cardiac arrest is as high as 49 percent.

## Emergency Cardiovascular and Stroke Care

We strongly endorse the enactment of regulatory and legislative remedies to support the development of a strong chain of survival, including:

- \* Removal of barriers to providing emergency response through prompt access to the emergency medical systems
- \* Support for universal CPR training
- \* Expanding lifesaving strategies of care
- \* Support for registries that can track the effectiveness for various initiatives
- \* Facilitating the removal of barriers to the delivery of more-effective resuscitation interventions


We strongly support the enactment of regulatory and legislative remedies like SJ5 to support the development of a strong stroke chain of survival, including:

- Fully deployed enhanced 911 system:
  - \* Rapid start of pre-hospital care
  - \* Rapid Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system transport and hospital pre-notification
  - \* Rapid diagnosis and treatment at the hospital

As we have all heard today, Montana's Emergency Medical Service system is in trouble. Montanans, especially in our rural areas, are dying or are suffering lifelong disabilities because there was no Enhanced 911 associated with rapid deployment of trained emergency medical technicians to stabilize the individual in crisis and transport them to the nearest, appropriate hospital.

SJ5 is a common sense approach to finding the remedies for our EMS systems. Over the next one and a half years, with legislative oversight, hopefully we will be able to find remedies to this critical part of the chain of survival that ends with just a short stay at a hospital, followed by full recovery and productivity.

Sincerely,



Cliff Christian,

Director of Governmental Affairs

American Heart Association

American Stroke Association

4525 Highway 12 West

Helena, Montana 59601

496-442-6515